

BMC North West Area Meeting
29th Jan 2019, Sedgley Park Rugby Club.
MINUTES

Attendance – 19

BMC Officer in attendance – Dave Turnbull

Chair – Emily Pitts

Secretary – Paul Evans

Area Members:

Carl Spencer

Bill Beveridge

Andy Cairns

Dominic Hartin

Michelle Mudhar

Dan Susnik

Roberta Spagnul

Mike Spooner

Jim Gregson

Tim Greenhalgh

Observers: Alison Cairns, Gareth Pierce, Steve Clark, Lynn Robinson, David Brown, Liz Fowler (Guest Speaker)

Apologies. Apologies reported to meeting: Andy Say, John Roberts, Richard Toon, John Shaw, Stuart Holmes, Mark Garrod, Dave Robinson.

1. Vote of thanks. Emily Pitts welcomed attendees to the first meeting with the new chair and secretary. She gave a vote of thanks to Carl Spencer and Andy Say for their work as chair and secretary during a challenging period.

2. Minutes of last meeting (AGM - 19th November 2018)

No comments had been received, and no issues were raised in the meeting, so the minutes were approved.

3. Open forum - what do members want from this meeting? How should we communicate?

There was some discussion on the location of the meeting, this being the first meeting at a new location. Members felt that having a location just off the motorway was convenient and easy to access.

It was also suggested that area meetings might use a particular “theme” for specific meetings, advertised 2-3 weeks in advance. This might draw in members with an interest in that theme topic, who might not otherwise attend.

CS gave a history of NW meeting locations over his two periods as area chair. Key points -

- If we are discussing access / crag issues, it helps to have the meeting close to the place with the issue.
- If we are discussing “political” issues, it helps to have the meeting at a fixed location so that the same people attend successive meetings and are aware of background as the topic develops.

EP showed a “heatmap” of where members tended to be concentrated in the NW area. A number of members thought that it would be useful to rotate the meeting location.

Discussion about days of the week and a Tuesday being difficult for some club members. Suggestion from Mark to hold meetings on a different day of the week each time which could happen once the current planned dates have run out. This should help to mitigate the Tuesday night issue in the longer term.

Action: EP & PE to propose locations for the coming months.

MM said that she was interested in improving access to areas where people with a disability might not be thought to go. Measures such as selective removal of particular stiles can help with this. **Action: EP & MM** to discuss before next meeting with a view to engaging with hillwalking reps and developing a plan of action.

JG queried whether (and if so how) hillwalking initiatives were currently being funded in the BMC. He wanted to know how any proposed increase in subs would be spent (see AOB item below). **Action: EP** to get more information from the BMC about this for next meeting. **JG** to bring a list of what he would like to see as regards hillwalking provision to the next meeting.

Two members had not received BMC local area emails - **Action: PE** to investigate with head office. Update - both members were on BMC email circulation list and had received and opened most recent email.

There was discussion on whether we should produce a NW area newsletter, along the lines of the Peak, Lakes and North Wales ones. A number of members supported this, though there were concerns about the costs of a printed version; an online version would have zero external cost; it would obviously take volunteer time. Other members thought that a printed version distributed free at walls and outdoor shops could have a very positive effect on the profile of the BMC and the NW area.

Discussion around communications, NW events and newsletter. Selected members said they were happy to contribute to short survey to get their ideas on these things.

Action: EP to produce a short survey for attendees and email to them via Tony at the office.

4. Area Rep Reports / Current Local Issues / NW Events

a. Access. A subgroup had met earlier in the month and discussed Lancs access issues.

CS summarised key points -

- Brownstones. No change re access agreement. Drainage issues on hold.
- Houghton. Will continue to require close cooperation with the landowner.
- The peg on Shivers Arete was agreed in principal to be replaced “like for like” however there are some concerns about how practical this will be.
- Lower off bolts are to be installed on a limited area at Lester Mill.
- A cleanup is to be organised at Denham in March.

TG reported that planning for the 2019 Wilton fest was ongoing, and that the recent Darwen Mountain Film festival had again been successful.

Introduction of Dom, who is access rep in Clitheroe and Mark, who covers Cheshire and Merseyside. DH reported that a cleanup was to be scheduled at Kemple End.

MH reported on access and related issues on Cheshire Sandstone crags. The installation of belay anchors at Pex Hill had been well received, and had helped to resolve UU concerns about climbers belaying to their fences. Further installation of belay anchors (not lower offs) at a particular area of a second Cheshire crag is planned, with the support of local activists. The character of the routes will not be affected, this is just to allow leaders to anchor safely, and avoid routes becoming neglected.

b. Clubs. An area clubs rep is still required. PE gave a brief summary of the points from the most recent BMC clubs newsletter. 3 attendees had experience of the different BMC courses available for club members, and their feedback was positive.

c. Youth & Climbing Walls. SH was not able to make the meeting. CS reported that the YCS is currently in progress and that the new format is working very well. Comps are finishing sooner, and competitors are enjoying the events more.

d. Hillwalking. EP reported that two area members had volunteered to work as NW area Hillwalking reps, although neither of the volunteers were able to make the meeting. EP and PE to meet with these volunteers, to agree priorities for Hillwalking in the NW area, and report back to the next meeting.

5. National Council. CS reported that the Dec National Council meeting had been a very long day. AM had been taken up with reports from specialist committees, PM with ODG reports, and the evening with regular business. There were no specific issues on which area votes or input were needed for the upcoming February meeting.

6. ODG - LR gave a brief summary of recent developments in the ODG (Organisational Development Group). Interested members can review all documents issued to date at the web page <https://odg.thebmc.co.uk/hc/en-gb> where they can also submit any comments they may have.

7. AOB

7.1 DT reported that due to a very significant 3rd party liability claim which is currently ongoing, arising from a life changing accident at a climbing wall, the BMC was faced with a

substantial increase in costs for 3rd party liability insurance cover provided to members. This will require a subs increase, but before this can be implemented, a budget deficit of around £200k is likely. A further report will be provided at the next meeting.

7.2 BB reminded the meeting that he had agreed to attend the last NC meeting on a trial basis, to see if the NC rep role was appropriate. He was willing to continue in the role, and asked the meeting to vote to confirm this was their wish. Votes 11 for, 1 against.

7.3 LR reminded the meeting that the BMC National AGM was at 12.00 noon on Sunday 31 March 2019 at the Devonshire Dome in Buxton. It would be great to see as many members there as possible, but members who cannot attend in person are reminded that the same electronic proxy voting system as last year will be used, so please do review the papers for the meeting, and make sure your vote counts!

7.4 A request was made over email to find out how things are going with Lynn's volunteer strategy/ supporting volunteers work. **Action: LR** to provide a short feedback for next meeting.

8. Liz Fowler attended and gave her presentation "BMC volunteer goes new routing in Morocco".